

Around the House



NEWS FROM THE HOUSING & COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Volume 6, Issue 4

July/August, 2009

Public Housing Property Upkeep Reminders

Once a year Property Managers will visit Public Housing units to inspect the condition of the apartment/house and appliances. The apartment/house is checked to make sure no fire or health hazards exist and to determine what unreported maintenance may be necessary. Residents are given at least a 48 hour written notice before the inspection. If the rental unit is not in good condition due to poor housekeeping, follow-up inspections will be scheduled. Public Housing will allow reasonable time for tenants to improve their housekeeping skills, and to allow maintenance staff time to make needed repairs if necessary. However, if conditions do not improve eviction proceedings will begin.

In addition, HUD contracts with independent inspection firms to conduct the annual inspection of approximately 20% of Public Housing's rental inventory. All inspections are performed using the Uniform Physical Condition Standards (UPCS). UPCS inspections ensure that residents of Public Housing are living in safe, clean and decent rental housing.

At the top of the list of safety items is that all units have operational smoke detectors. It is also recommended that all residents test their smoke detector on a monthly basis by depressing the test button on the smoke detector. Public Housing's smoke detectors are directly wired to the unit's electrical system with a battery backup. When the battery is low, the detector will "chirp" until the battery is replaced. Please call Public Housing Maintenance

at 462-3789 when the battery is low. All electrical outlets must have the proper switch or receptacle covers and the covers are not to be damaged or cracked. Electrical safety problems, plumbing leaks, gas leaks, broken door locks, broken windows or other health or safety hazards should be reported immediately to Public Housing Maintenance at 462-3789.

It is very important that residents in single-family dwellings maintain their front and back yards. Grass should not be allowed to grow to a height of over 3 inches. Lawns should be mowed at least every 10 days and edged next to concrete surfaces—more frequently (once/week) in the spring. It is also a violation of UPCS if vegetation touches the house or a fence. It is the resident's responsibility to remove small trees next to the foundation or fence line, and to trim hedges or bushes away from the house or fence.

UPCS requires that residents keep their rental units clean. All bathroom and kitchen fixtures shall be cleaned regularly using the proper cleaning agents. Ranges and ovens should be cleaned of any grease buildup to prevent kitchen fires. Damages resulting from accidental fires due to resident neglect, are charged to the resident. Vinyl floors including the corners should be cleaned and waxed. Carpets should be vacuumed weekly and spots removed with carpet cleaner. Dirty walls and doors can be cleaned with a mild detergent and water. All Public Housing rental units are painted

with paint that can be scrubbed. Tenants will not be issued paint, unless the need has been confirmed by a Property Manager's inspection. All windows, mirrors and storm doors need to be cleaned with window cleaner. Trash should never be allowed to accumulate in the unit or the yard. Tires should be left at tire shops and not brought back to the rental property.

Residents are encouraged to purchase renters insurance from their insurance agent because the City is not responsible for the loss of personal items.

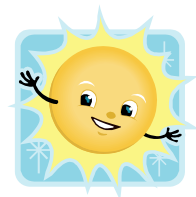
Public Housing staff is responsible for making repairs in compliance with UPCS. Residents will be assessed at the rate of \$15.00/hour for labor plus the cost of supplies for cleaning or repairs that are not a result of normal wear. When a resident moves out of a Public Housing unit, they are required to clean the entire house or apartment in order to receive their security deposit refund. Prior to moving out the resident should schedule a time for a joint exit inspection with their Property Manager.

The Public Housing Program supports the inspection process and will enforce the lease agreement as it applies to the residents' responsibility to maintain their Public Housing units in a safe, clean and decent manner. Residents are reminded that there is a \$15 trip charge if no one is at home for a maintenance appointment. A 14-day notice is sent when residents are not at home for a recertification appointment.

See inside for tips
on staying



this summer!



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Around the House

From the Director



Mary K. Vaughn invites readers to submit questions related to department programs for a new feature: **Ask the Director!**

This newsletter includes several reminders and policies related to your responsibility as a tenant, client or landlord. It may seem as though we are cracking down on participation requirements for Housing Authority programs—and in many ways that is true. More and more agencies are making adjustments in their operations to deal with budget cuts. We are also trying to manage our program resources to provide you with safe, affordable housing. However each person receiving assistance has responsibilities also. This

newsletter outlines many of those responsibilities and I again urge you to take seriously the housing that we are providing for you—and to do your part to keep it. If you have questions about any of these policies and reminders please call your Property Manager (Public Housing) or Housing Specialist (Section 8).

I also want to highlight for those of you who are parents, that enrollment for the next school year will soon take place. This is another area of responsibility you have as a

parent—to see that your school-age children are enrolled in and attend school regularly. Enrollment for USD 259 will take place on July 29 -31 and August 3 and 4. School starts on August 17 so it's not too late to start preparing.

And finally I want to remind you to send in questions about the Housing and Community Services Department, for *Ask the Director!*

Mary K. Vaughn

COOL TIP:

DRINK LOTS OF WATER. AVOID ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES AND CAFFEINATED DRINKS.



Our Employee Values

- ◆ Respectfully helping others achieve safe, affordable housing
- ◆ Empowering people and improving neighborhoods
- ◆ Making a difference—right where people live
- ◆ Investing in people with their housing needs

Housing Authority Board Vacancy

City Ordinance No. 189 states that the Wichita Housing Authority Board is made up of the Wichita City Council and "one additional member who is a tenant receiving public housing or Section 8 assistance from the City of Wichita". Following are the minimum requirements for this position.

- Must be current in all Housing Authority obligations and in good standing.
- Must be able to attend Housing Authority Board meetings

which are held on Tuesdays. Note: Meetings are not held every Tuesday, but are scheduled when official Board action is required.

- Must be able to be available from 9:00 am until at least noon on Housing Authority Board meeting days. Note: Meetings are held toward the end of the City Council meeting; thus the exact time of each meeting is not predictable. Meetings have been known to run as late as 2:30 pm.

- Must commit to reading meeting materials in advance, and be comfortable in reading the recommendation in the public Board meeting setting.
- Must have own transportation to and from Board meetings which are held at the Wichita City Hall.

There is no compensation for Board members, however free parking is available in the City Hall garage. If the meeting schedule extends through the noon hour and the other Board members adjourn the meeting for lunch prior to calling the Board agenda, lunch will also be provided for the Housing Authority Board member.

If you are interested in serving in this capacity and can meet all of the listed requirements, please complete the enclosed form and return to the Housing and Community Services Department Director's Office no later than Friday, July 24, 2009. A panel will review applications and make a selection by July 31, 2009.

Employee News!

On June 1 the Housing and Community Services Department welcomed new employee Kelly Hay. Kelly is an electrician with the Public Housing maintenance staff.

We have not done a lot of hiring lately—due in part to the need to reduce expenditures because of the budget, but also because our employees stay with us for a long time! Recently the following employees were recognized for multiple years of service:

Keith Talbert—25 years

Lee Converse—10 years

Greg Harrison—10 years

Terry Jones—10 years



Congratulations to all!

Section 8 Inspection Policy—For Tenants and Landlords

Annual and special inspections of properties leased by Section 8 tenants are required by law. When properties are in good condition, the process goes smoothly. However, when properties fail inspections, corrections must be made. The following inspection policy is in effect. Failure to adhere to the instructions may result in clients losing their housing and landlords losing their tenants.

PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO THIS NEW POLICY!!!

- If your unit fails inspection, you will receive a letter informing you what items failed.

- You are required to have all of these items repaired or corrected before your re-inspection appointment.
- Your re-inspection appointment will automatically be scheduled approximately 30 days from the date of your original inspection date.

If you fail to have all your failed items corrected before your re-inspection appointment, you will be sent a termination letter.

24-hr Fail Items

If you have any 24-hr fail items, your re-inspection will take place the following day. You have only 24 hrs. to repair or correct these items.

All appointments for first and follow up inspections must be kept. If you miss 2 appointments without calling in advance, you will be sent a termination letter.

You can ask to re-schedule your inspection appointment only if you have not missed two appointments, you have good cause, and your request comes no less than seven days before the inspection appointment date.

As noted in the last newsletter extensions must be requested in writing, seven days in advance of the inspection date.

Family Self-Sufficiency
Workshop
Atwater Neighborhood
City Hall
2755 E 19th
6:00 pm

August 6

Section 8 Homeowners
Alumni Meeting
Atwater Neighborhood
City Hall
2755 E 19th
5:30 pm

August 10

Section 8 Applications OPEN on July 31, 2009

Preliminary applications will be taken beginning Friday, July 31, 2009 and continuing until further notice.

Special arrangements have been made to accept on-site applications for ONE DAY ONLY. On Friday, July 31, 2009, applications may be completed on-site at the Wichita State University Metropolitan Complex at 5015 E. 29th Street North, Room 185A and 185B. This ONE DAY

ONLY on-site application center will open at 9:00 a.m. and close at 4:00 p.m. Applications can be completed on-site or you can take the application with you.

However you do not have to go to the Metroplex. Applications are also available online at www.wichita.gov/cityoffices/housing/section8 beginning on Friday, July 31, 2009 at 9:00 a.m.

Starting Monday, August 3, 2009, applications can be picked up at the Housing and Community Services Department office, 332 N. Riverview, from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Applications will be accepted until further notice, and will be processed based on the date and time of receipt. If you know of someone who needs Section 8 rental assistance, please share this information with them.

COOL TIP:

**DON'T SIT IN
A HOT CAR, EVEN
FOR A FEW
MINUTES.
NEVER LEAVE A
CHILD OR A PET
IN A CAR.**

HAP Payment Schedule

MONTH	CHECK MAIL DATE
August, 2009	July 31, 2009
September, 2009	August 31, 2009
October, 2009	September 28, 2009

NOTE: Even though we try hard to maintain this schedule, there are times when circumstances beyond our control cause delays, such as recent breakdowns of the City's mail machine. This is one more reason to sign up for Direct Deposit!



Don't forget to sign up for direct deposit of Housing Assistance Payments for fast access to your funds! Go to www.wichita.gov and click on the Finance Department. From there you will see a link for Automated Clearinghouse (ACH). Click there and follow the 3 simple steps.

Mission .. To provide housing & related services to benefit the citizens & neighborhoods of Wichita

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Housing & Community Services
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We're On the Web!
www.wichita.gov/cityoffices/housing



**This NEWS
YOU CAN
USE column
was written
by Nattalee
Vickers, Fam-
ily Self-
Sufficiency
Program
Manager**

DARE TO DREAM!

HOMEOWNERSHIP!

This is the number one goal that Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) participants have. Eighty-four percent (84%) of FSS families dream of owning their own home. And dreams are good. I know from personal experience! In high school I dreamed of being an executive in a company one day. (Honestly – I did—during a business class!) Eighteen years later I owned my own successful business, ran it for sixteen years and sold it five years ago. Was it a lot of work *getting* to the ownership part? Yes. Was it a lot of work *running* the business after I owned it? Yes. But was it worth it? YES! Fulfilling worthwhile dreams usually takes a lot of planning and a lot of work.

Once you enter the FSS program, first you dream. Then

you determine, with the help of your FSS Coordinator, the barriers separating you from that dream. Then you go to work tearing down those barriers. With counseling provided by your FSS Coordinator, you will discover resources within our community to help you do that. It will take time. It will take effort on your part. This is the difficult part—but it is the essential part. It is the distance between “wanting” and “achieving”.

In June we offered a FSS workshop on Credit Repair. It was an excellent presentation with lots of information. (How are credit scores determined? Is credit the most important factor determining loan approval and interest rate? How do lenders prioritize the items on your report? What simple

things can you do to affect your score? Where can you go to access your credit report AND discuss its findings?) Believe me you cannot hear this information too often. I worked in this field during my entire career and I still gained new information.

We have several more FSS workshops in 2009 regarding homeownership, college scholarships and grants, job retention and last but not least, the amazing FSS benefit known as “Escrow Credits”. If you want to learn more about **Family Self-Sufficiency**, just visit the Section 8 office and complete a Pre-Enrollment/Interest application so you will be placed on a wait-list for our next Orientation coming soon.